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July 28, 1983

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Re: Addiction Task Force

Gentlemen:

For your information, I am enclosing a copy of a presentation, entitled "Tobacco Addiction and Other Drug Abuse Among American Youth", that was given by Dr. R. T. Ravenholt and Dr. William Pollin, both of the Alcohol, Drug Abuse and Mental Health Administration, at the 5th World Conference on Smoking and Health, held at Winnipeg, Canada in July, 1983. Pat Sirridge of Shook, Hardy & Bacon attended the conference and provided me with a copy of the presentation. He and I believe that this paper provides a good insight into the attitudes of and positions taken by people who have the responsibility for studying the issue of "tobacco addiction" within HHS.

As you know, under the Alcohol and Drug Abuse Amendments of 1983, the Secretary of HHS is required to report to Congress by January 15, 1984, describing "current research findings made with respect to drug abuse, including current findings on the health effects on marijuana and the addictive property of tobacco." For your information I am enclosing a copy of the Act as it was introduced in the House by Representative Waxman (Congressional Record April 13, 1983 pages H 2064-2068.) Also, as you know, both the Mansfield and Reach cases now have allegations about addiction and the letter received from Mr. Tritzsch and Joseph C. Palmer has allegations about addiction that probably will be repeated in the complaint if and when it is filed and served.

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Joseph H. Greer, Esq.
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In connection with the Addiction Task Force which was set up by the Committee of Counsel at its meeting in Washington on May 18, 1983, I took part in a conference call initiated by Sam Witt when I was in San Francisco last week on a witness search. As you know, we are studying the addiction literature in preparation for our defense of lawsuits since we will have to take a position on the issue and have expert witnesses. It appeared that we were the only firm making such a preparation, although both Shook, Hardy and Jacob, Medinger & Finnegan have lawyers out talking to people about the subject. Because we were already under way, Sam Witt asked me to undertake preparing a draft of the industry position paper and I agreed because it will entail about the same amount of work we would have to do anyway in regard to the litigation. Dr. Frank Colby, formerly of R. J. Reynolds Tobacco Company and now at Jacob, Medinger, will assist us since he is an expert in the literature. The other firms are undertaking other projects.

Sam Witt scheduled a meeting of the Addiction Task Force on August 10, 1983, and he has apparently told Art Stevens that he and his Task Force will report to the Committee of Council at its meeting on August 24, 1983. It is clear that, if we are to have any impact at all on the report to Congress, we will have to act promptly. I do not know, however, what we are able to accomplish. Sam Chilcote and his colleagues at the Tobacco Institute will have to tell us what can be done.

I will keep you advised about the Task Force's activities.

Best regards.

Sincerely,

Francis K. Decker, Jr.

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Enclosure
cc: R. Hooker, Esq.